

1LT Paul Davis Marable Jr.

1921 – 2013

PART A: “ON THE BEACH” with Bill Moyers

MEN, MEETINGS, AND MEMORIES

Since the 1800's, towns and cities in Texas have been centers of both prosperity and decline. These realities were the shared traits of a small town called Clarksville and the location of Paul's parents, Paul Davis Marable, Sr. and Maude Cook Marable, where their son, Paul Davis Marable, Jr. was born on August 21, 1921. After completing his public-school requirements in this Red River area, Paul set his sights on a college education, was accepted at the University of Texas in Austin, and graduated with a degree in journalism. The knowledge and experience gained in these pursuits would be valuable assets in his professional life after the war.

Following America's entry into World War II, Paul registered for the draft, was commissioned as a Second Lieutenant in the Artillery and assigned to the 90th Infantry Division.

Countless books, articles, college courses, historical lectures and movies have become legends by analyzing and reproducing the conflicts, dramatic implications, and sites of this war, but only a portion of those who endured and survived have had the opportunity or the desire to revisit them. Among those most notable was a “*Return to Normandy*” series at which actual participants were present and interviewed by Journalist and Public Television Reporter Bill Moyers.

These men who fought World War II literally saved Western Civilization from barbarism. We owe them our freedom today. So I look forward to accompanying some of these men...as they return to the scenes of the battle. I believe there is an important documentary to be made as they recall their experiences and talk about their lives then and since.

The 66 veterans and others interested in military history became part of a University of Texas travel-study group organized by Tom Hatfield, Dean of Continuing Education and organizer of three previous trips. This two-week trip visited European battlefields and historic sites of the war, including Normandy, the Ardennes Forest where the Battle of the Budge took place, and the Remagen Bridge where Allied armies forces crossed the Rhine into Germany. The

broadcast was viewed on “*The 45th Anniversary of Victory-in-Europe*” on May 8, 1990 on PBS.

This portion of the series featured four such heroic veterans: Howard Randall, Max Lale, Jose Lopez and Paul Marable; their synchronized perspectives offered first-person experiences of the war from a soldier’s you-had-to-be-there viewpoint.

Mr. and Mrs. Marable’s daughter, UT faculty member Betty Sue Flowers, had worked as a consultant and editor for Mr. Moyers on other projects and when she showed him her father’s book of war memories [*255 Days*], she was invited to join the trip. This was actually his second trip to the beach as in 1971, Paul and his wife, Betty Lou, had visited the area. Now he could share first-person memories with his daughter as well. The tour would also give him an opportunity to visit several sites he missed on his first visit, including an Allied Cemetery between Omaha Beach and Utah Beach in Normandy.

Sue Ann Jones, an accomplished writer in her own right for the *Waco Tribune Herald*, wrote this August 4, 1989 article, “Sentimental journey returning to beach where he was part of D-Day push” which summarized initial impressions of a beach LT Marable had crossed so long ago.

I could not pinpoint the very 50 yards of beach, but a monument to the 90th Division has been erected on a German gun emplacement there...I had a strange feeling while I was there. Later I realized it was because I could walk upright – not running around bent over, then stop and fall down.

THE BATTLE FOR D-DAY SUPREMECY AND BEYOND

The next biography segment was collected from portions of *Bill Moyers Online Journal*, dated May 27, 2007.

Moyers:

It was in 1989 that I joined Jose Lopez, Max Lale, Paul Marable and Howard Randall on a trip back to the battlefields of their youth. As we traveled from the beach where they landed in France to the Rhine River on the German border, they told me their stories of war...many for the first time.

The program can be viewed in entirety at <http://billmoyers.com> D-Day Reunion: A Special Update of the Documentary ‘From D-Day to the Rhine’ or on a subsequent PBS program date.

1LT Marable landed on Utah Beach D-Day +2 escorting two trucks loaded with ammunition then directing his men to their assembly point. Their job was to

cross the peninsula and stop the Germans from escaping or being reinforced. He recalled his feelings that day as he swung down the side of the transport ship on a rope ladder.

Was I afraid? I think the term 'exhilaration' describes it best. Maybe fear was a part of that. Or maybe it was anxiety.

Moving inward, Moyers observed, the Allied forces next faced the hedgerows.

The Norman Hedgerows, ancient thick walls of vegetation and dirt. Concealed behind them, the enemy put up fierce resistance at close range. Many a soldier lost his life on a field surrounded by hedgerows.

Paul relives this experience as a forward observer in his own words for as a young man it was buried in his memory.

This is the hill. I wound up at the crest of the hill overlooking the roadway helping a sergeant with a machine gun and that's where I was when we had big trouble—a tank came around that side there under our position to where I can still hear the gears in that turret turning and—they elevated that gun and shot right into the face of this cliff. The front of the L trench jumped at us, but the sergeant, he got to his feet, with his rifle and started shooting down on the tank. I don't know whether he was trying to shoot into the muzzle. I have never known but we took a second round which killed him and I scrambled back out of that place and dropped into a little hole 10 or 15 yards on back on the hill.

I think I drifted in and out because more time passed when I finally looked at my watch than I realized—but I was stunned, yes. And then I felt this poking on the back side of my left shoulder and I thought it was one of our people, of course. I turned around and instead, it was a German soldier with what we call a burp gun, a Schmeiser I believe is the correct name for a machine pistol.

*And he let me know that I was supposed to come out. The best I could hear him—he was speaking English at that point and said, '**For you the war is over.**' Yes he said that directly to me.*

The date of capture was 19 June 1944, at Port Ball, France.

Source: <http://oflag64.us> from the Oflag 64 POW Database

When asked if he felt lucky to be alive during this, his 68th year, Paul replied with these heart-felt feelings:

Oh yes. Every day since that German didn't just take care of me where I was, I've thought I've lived on borrowed time. And it's been a

blessing in many, many ways. I have thought that because of that I've been able, a little bit better than most maybe, who haven't gone through that, to decide what's really important. I don't get disturbed easily at little frets. And then I feel that I owe some things to the good Lord and those around me.

When word spread about the inhumane massacre of unarmed Americans at Malmedy and the sense of cold-blooded murder, Paul replied:

My case was a little different—a one-on-one thing. As you say, you're not in a very dignified situation, but I know one thing I've wondered since. I work in a financial institution and I've always thought if somebody came in to rob it and should point a pistol at me, I wonder if I wouldn't fly apart and do something really foolish because I never again want anybody to point a gun at me, which happened frequently when you are a prisoner of war. You've got somebody pointing a gun at you, and that is a bad feeling and a pretty humiliating experience.

A day out there on the battlefield is not the Hollywood neat hole that makes 'em fall and are quiet all of a sudden and go into a state of rest.

It's grabbing faces and it's screaming and its rolling on the ground and, I'll tell you, you prop somebody with a throat wound up against a hedgerow and his last heartbeats will squirt blood four feet out in streams. When you see things like that and worse, you know you are being killed. You don't think a short second about whether you should be killing them or not.

Howard Randall continues this line of discussion:

If you don't kill those guys when you can, the next day you're going to meet 'em and they may kill you and they may kill your best buddy. So, no matter how you feel about it, it's your duty to kill these men as fast and as many as you can.

Marable replies:

I think it was Patton who said our duty is not to die for our country. It's to make them die for theirs. And that's what we are about.

Howard Randall's personal viewpoint:

The war changed my self-perception. When I got out of it, I realized I didn't have to do any of the macho posturing I had done as a teenager and as a young man. You're always showing off and, my God, you can't get much more Rambo than running at the enemy shooting your gun as fast as you can. It seemed pretty obvious after the first major

encounter and the men came back to a rest area, nothing petty arises. There are no arguments. The guys like each other much more than they ever did before. They had a common bond of existing together under terrible hardship and everything petty just kind of goes out the window.

Randall achieved the rank of Lt. Colonel during his four European campaigns and was highly decorated. He also remained active in the U.S. Army Reserves.

Max Lale personal's response:

I came to look upon the Germans really not as men, but as machines. They were intent on killing me as I was them, and we had a mission. You'd do it. Or do the best you can to do it.

Jose Lopez was known to be a quiet, introspective man. A survivor of two wars, he rose to the rank of Sergeant First Class. Seeing his first action on Omaha Beach again, he stated,

I wanted to scream. I want to cry and we see other people were lying wounded and screaming and everything and it's nothing you could do. We could see them groaning in the water and we just kept moving.

Bill Moyers "gamble" summation:

With his armies in retreat, Hitler made one last desperate gamble to split the Allies on the Western Front. The Battle of the Bulge would become the largest pitched battle ever fought by an American army. The German counterattack had caught the Allies completely off guard. For weeks the fighting was confused and desperate.

With this being said, Lopez accompanied Moyers to the place near Krinkelt, Belgium, where he stood on December 17, 1944, as Moyers read the ending citation which credits his courage and stamina in pursuing the enemy—The Congressional Medal of Honor. It closes with this remarkable summary of his intrepid actions:

"Sergeant Lopez' gallantry, on seemingly suicidal missions in which he killed at least 100 of the enemy, was almost solely responsible for allowing Company K to avoid being enveloped and to withdraw successfully and to give other forces coming up in support time to build a line which repelled the enemy drive."

When queried for a response, Lopez replied,

All I remember is 'no more rounds' and just carried my gun and I just walked and I could whistle away from the bullets behind my back. Then I care less. I just want to get up there to meet the rest of my unit. Any man would do the same thing, anybody. And the next morning

they came looking for Lopez, Sgt. Lopez. So they finally woke me up, and they started patting me on the back. He said, 'You got the Congressional Medal of Honor.'

An official photo of this extraordinary event is available on the internet with Sgt. Lopez wearing the Medal of Honor and holding the presentation box in his left hand while shaking right hands with Maj. Gen. Van Fleet, both standing in a treed area near an active 'Bulge' battle site. Caption appears below the photo.



"Sergeant Lopez, Jose M., receives his Medal of Honor from Maj. Gen Van Fleet, then Commander of U.S. Third Corps."

Photo courtesy of the Texas State Historical Association

U.S. Latino & Latina World War II History Project

University of Texas at Austin

Source: <https://www.tshaonline.org/handbook/entries/lopez-jose-mendoza>

According to THE CONGRESSIONAL MEDAL OF HONOR SOCIETY site, formal presentation of the award occurred on June 18, 1945 in the Zepman Stadium in Nuremberg, Germany. Maj. General Van Fleet was the presenting officer.

Source: <http://www.cmohs.org>

LIFE AFTER THE CEASE FIRE

Returning from the war Marable was stationed at Fort Sill, Oklahoma. There he met and married Betty Lou Lewis in 1946. Later he began his career in the Chamber of Commerce before becoming Manager of the Denison Chamber of Commerce. In 1951, he was recalled to active duty and was posted to Japan as an artillery battery commander.

Mr. Marable continued his life of service throughout his professional and retirement years including positions of leadership as both president, chairman and advisor in many meaningful local and state organizations including those at Baylor University. His guidance and generosity are still remembered fondly by those who profited by his wisdom and farsightedness. Paul Davis Marable, Jr. died on December 19, 2013.

Source: <https://www.findagrave.com/memorial/136049452/paul-davis-marable>, Wilkirson-Hatch-Bailey Funeral Home, Waco, Texas

Max Lale enjoyed a very successful professional life. He was a published author, journalist, newspaper publisher and civic leader. Perhaps his most notable achievement was to become President of the Texas State Historical Society. After publishing his memoirs, he kept writing articles and essays for historical journals. His wife Cissy reports that on the last day of his life he finished an article on a lush piece of Texas history. He died on April 24, 2006.

Howard Randall offered his lifetime perspective at a buddies' lunch with wives at the home of Paul and Betty Marable.

All decisions in later life are viewed in the perspective of your early experience in war, and I wasn't afraid to just make a major decision involving money or stuff because I'd say to myself, 'Hell, if I lose it, I'm still alive and nobody is shooting at me.'

The Randalls bought a ranch in the Hill Country of Texas near Austin and worked it for 30 years. He complimented wife Carolyn's stamina when working beside him, especially when he developed macular degeneration. Eventually, they sold the ranch and moved to California to be near family in Napa Valley. He died October 27, 2016.

Master Sergeant Jose Mendoza Lopez remained in the San Antonio area and served as a Representative for the Veterans Administration. His life with wife,

Emilia Herrera Lopez, and family members remained the main focus throughout the rest of his life.

This final quote by Moyers summarizes the nation's heart-felt gratitude and recognition for a man who 'risked it all' for the 'all' in us:

A hush fell over the Texas House of Representative on May 16, 2005 when word came that Jose Mendoza Lopez had died. The governor ordered flags flown at half mast in respect for the 94-year-old winner of the Medal of Honor. That January he had made his last trip to Washington to attend the second inauguration of George W. Bush. That same month during an interview he sang from memory a Spanish love song he had often crooned to his wife Emilia, who died a year earlier. Their son John said of his devoted and devoted and devout parents, 'They're dancing up their now.'

FINAL RECONS

From Marable:

*There is a book out, a best seller some time ago called *Flags of our Fathers* about the raising of the flags on Mount Suribachi, Iwo Jima, and the author, whose father was one of the flag raisers, quotes him in that book as saying the only heroes are dead and that's when I think of any greatest generation, I think of that ultimate sacrifice, not those of us who have survived it, but those that didn't.*

From Moyers:

When I first met them in 1989, I wondered how these fellows could put behind them the memories of war. I came to understand they never did and never can. Max, Howard, Paul and Jose remind me of the millions of boys who went to war for our country and came home as men.

In the Introduction and Acknowledgments section of Stephen Ambrose's historic book, *Citizen Soldiers* (p.13), his words express poetically and emphatically their profiles of courage.

This book is about the citizen soldiers of the U.S. Army and the U.S. Army Air Forces in the Europe Operations in World War II. —it is not a book about the generals. It is about the GIs, the junior officers and enlisted men of ETO—who they were, how they fought, why they fought, what they endured, how they triumphed.

Part B: BOOKMARKS

TWO-HUNDRED FIFTY-FIVE DAYS

PAUL DAVIS MARABLE, JR.

4101 Lyle – Waco, Texas

February 16, 1970

DEDICATION: TO MY CHILDREN



Twenty-five years ago, on the last day of this month, I boarded a British merchant ship in Odessa, Russia, ending for me a memorable 255-day experience – first, as a war prisoner of Nazi Germany, then as an unwelcome guest of Red Russia.

Occasionally, to relatives and friends, I have told small parts of the story before; but this is the first time I have attempted to chronicle much of it.

In writing this account I have tried not to allow present feelings and influence of the past twenty-five years to color the narrative. I have called upon my memories, and I am depending on their vividness to recapture some of the scenes and my emotions of that other time.

It is not over a long period of time that I have been planning to write this story. When in June 1969 the news media presented intensive publicity about the Normandy invasion, twenty-five years ago, I began recalling my own involvement in that operation. I found my memory of most details sharp and clear while some others were beginning to fade. Idly and rather haphazardly I began outlining a chronology of some of the most memorable parts of my prisoner-of-war words to the outline here and there. Then in an old file, I found the only written thing I had done about an aspect of being a P.O.W. – the account of how carefully food was distributed at Offizierslager 64 in Poland and my observations of the workings of that situation of the inexorable law of supply and demand. It was part of an address I had delivered to the student body of the Midland, Texas, High School on November 15, 1955.

And so I began. I began by writing the answer to a question which is invariably the first asked by everyone upon being told that I was once a prisoner of war: “How did you get captured?” Then I decided that

perhaps I should set a deadline of the twenty-fifth anniversary of my leaving Russia for repatriation as the date to finish these memories.

Goodness and mercy have followed me all the days of my life since the 255 days came to an end.

The blessings of the years have been many. The greatest of these are your Mother and each of you, and none of the five of you, I believe, could comprehend the love and pride I have for each of you, undemonstrative as I outwardly am, but my cup runneth over.

Some of my blessings are also yours—the Mother you have, and the Grandparents you have on both sides of the family, and those families themselves, both the Marable and Lewis clans. These blessings will mean even more to you as years go by.

My spurting narrative is a poor effect, including my typing, but here it is for Betty Sue Marable Flowers, Paul Davis Marable, III, Linda Ruth Marable, and Robert Lewis Marable. May your lives contain many adventures also, but better ones.

Love,

Dad

FOR ME “THE WAR IS OVER”

This first chapter of the book gives a limited overview of the Normandy Invasion preparations with his duties as a forward observer in the 343th Field Artillery Battalion (105-millimeter howitzers) of the 90th Infantry Division.

My war had started, by my count, in late May with night bombings by the Luftwaffe of targets near our invasion staging area at Chepstow, England, on the Bristol Channel. We had been sealed off from the outside world to complete in secret the vehicle waterproofing, camouflage painting and other preparations for the amphibious assault on the European continent. Officers were briefed daily in the double-locked building. We had caravanned down from our base camp near Wolverhampton for the staging process, moving from the midlands through the more interesting and historic areas west of London.

The day came when preparations were said to be complete, and we went aboard our Liberty Ship in Bristol harbor. It was a stripped-down, cargo and personnel carrier. We left the Port of Bristol that same night. By the following morning, having cleared the protection afforded by the long Bristol Channel, we rounded Land’s End into heavy seas and wind. Many who without seasickness had made the

North Atlantic crossing in the big waves of March storms now felt it time to contribute their innards.

Not being cursed with any of this trouble, I could concentrate on the building excitement within me, perhaps the expectable emotions of a fired-up second lieutenant who had volunteered five days before his twenty-first birthday for military service, to escape the draft, and later for assignment for what was said to be a combat-ready division. Confidence and eagerness were my mood. Already there had been too much delay through two state-side maneuvers and much other training. Let's get at the Nazi, I fretted. I would already be twenty-three in three more months.

To be chosen among those to open the western front, to invade Fortress Europe; wasn't this something! Not only that, but I had been designated by Colonel Kenneth Reimers, our battalion commander, to be Beach Control Officer for our battalion, the first officer ashore from our ship and the one responsible for keeping tally on all vehicles and personnel making the landing. Proud.

Ours would be the Utah Beach, the northern-most of the string of British Canadian and American Invasion sectors on the coast of France. The 82nd and 101 Airborne Divisions would make their parachute and glider drops at dawn or before on June 6, the "D Day of Operation Overlord." Assault troops on our beach would be the 4th Infantry Division, with our division at its heels.

We received word from loudspeakers on the liberty ship, carrying official statements over the British Broadcasting Corporation radio that the invasion had begun.

We briefed the men. Mission for our division, to secure our beach, broaden and deepen the beachhead, then turn and race north to capture the City of Cherbourg and its strategic harbor.

Marable's observations concerning the challenges which developed during the invasion are proof of its complexity, but he states that his goal throughout this book is to contribute his personal experiences and those he knew and met throughout the war (pp. 2-12)

HERAUS

'*Komm oudt!*' This command was only given once. After Lt. Paul Marable recovered from the shock of being a captive, he was marched, hands over head, toward the backside of the hill arriving at a clearing where other American G.I.s were being held. The date was June 19, 1944.

Another German soldier pointed his Mauser at my chest and took me in tow before we reached the group, relieving the tanker of his duty. He noticed my University of Texas class ring and the Gruen Curvex watch I was wearing. I had bought that watch in an Abilene [Texas] pawn shop when watches were hard to find and the 90th was stationed at Camp Barkeley. He muttered something I couldn't understand, but I had no trouble understanding the meaning of his gestures. He wanted the watch and ring.

'Offizier! Gehen Sie!' I yelled at him, straightening out of my slump and recalling some words from our combat language lessons in England. He reacted as if one of his own officers had given him the order, standing perfectly still as I wandered over to the group. Later I wondered at my audacity, but at the moment, I was stupid, angry at the situation, myself, and this German. (pp. 12, 13)

The next officer was not interested in his jewelry, but relieved Marable's pocket of his invasion francs. Neither man looked apologetic.

Gestures and spoken commands became common knowledge through the next two months of his captivity. Waving hand signals were easy to interpret and the term "Heraus" became the most common addition with its similar German meanings of 'Out of here' 'Move', etc. (pp. 13,14)

WE WALK

Walking as a group became the mode of travel for the long days to come.

Near the middle of the dawn, we were passing through a French village where French women began crowding around our slow-moving column. They passed bread and other pieces of food to us. 'Merci beau coups' were yelled above the Germans guttural orders for the women to get away.

Late in the afternoon we entered a walled farmyard behind a house. The back side of the enclosure was formed by a row of stables. Here another set of guards took over. These lined us up in one rank with our backs to the stables then set up two machine guns pointing at us. They were the heavy model with flash hiders, and I already knew what they sounded like. Gunners manned each. 'Are they going to kill us, Lieutenant?'

Marable tried to assure those about him but was not completely sure himself until another swaggering officer stopped to speak to him.

'Why do you fight us?' he said in lightly accented English. 'We do you no harm.' I thought he must be insane. (pp.14 - 17)

Later in the day they were to see allied air force singles and groups flying over the countryside. This was to become a common occurrence. He also recognized Lt. Alvin G. McCormick from Livonia, New York. Both were from the 90th Division and would become POWs at Oflag 64.

Soup with and without bread became their usual meals when they were fed. The Germans announced this by shouting the word “*Essen!*” *My lasting impression of the Germans includes a belief that yelling is an essential part of their verbal communications.*

Everyone was hungry, tired, and cautious after seeing the numbers of German troops and vehicle traffic in the areas they walked through. *Somewhere enroute we had left even the distant sounds of battle.* (pp.18 – 20)

THE ORPHANAGE

Crossing a bridge, they were met at gates of a former French orphanage.

A German officer and five or six armed soldiers stopped and admitted us one at a time as our names were read out loud from a list of the German sergeant who had led our column. Marable noted earlier that the enlisted men had been separated from their group and marched away.

On the inside were American prisoners from the First Division, the Fourth, 82nd, 101st and 29th—some were nursing wounds from parachuting, etc. Food was almost non-existent. Many were trading their watches, rings, cigarettes—anything that had not been taken from them—for bread. Marable kept his—a *symbol for the growing disdain of our captors*—though he did accept some bull calf’s blood for his soup.

Looking out the undraped window, we could see a P-47 with a 500-pound bomb under each wing and coming in at us on almost a vertical course. This was it. Our three-story house would explode into kindling. No escape. There they were, both bombs now falling. We all ran out of the room and dived onto the hall floor just before the crunching roar and vibration. Missed. Glass everywhere. But no one was hit. The plane then pulled up from its dive and was already droning away, home. (pp.20 – 22)

WE RIDE

The next surprise came in the form of a charcoal-burning bus—a gasoline alternative. It made a continual wheezing noise, but at least they weren’t walking. After passing through the Alencon Airbase, they arrived in Fontainebleau where the bus stopped and guards stepped down out of the bus to stretch their legs.

From second and third-story buildings, French people were giving us the V sign and smiling. Someone threw a package of cigarettes down toward us, missing both trucks. Then came other packs, pieces of bread and fruit. The Germans went into rages. One guard fired at the window, not removing the dust cap from the muzzle of his Mauser. Jeers came now from the building and a crowd began gathering. I hoped for a riot that would spring us free; but guards and drivers jumped back into the trucks and we took off again. (pp. 22 – 24)

THE DUMMERLAGER

Next we entered Chalons-sur-Marne, then came to a building surrounded by fences and patrolled by German soldiers. Internally, they were led to German officer sporting an SS insignia.

He asked for name, rank, and serial number...the maximum information required of a prisoner of war under rules of the Geneva Convention. He had an aide record the information, said this would be the individual identification of the Kriegsgefangener (war prisoner) and that the tag should not be lost on penalty of death. He irked me in looks, manner and his whole being, confirming what I already thought of the SS. (p. 25)

The next man was dressed in civilian clothes and supposedly represented the International Red Cross and would notify next of kin of my situation. After Marable's refusal to say more, he learned that the information was already stamped on his dog tags including name, serial number, record of tetanus shot and booster, blood type, name an address of person to be notified in case of death or injury and P for Protestant. *I sheepishly pulled mine from inside my shirt by the metal chain around my neck and read for the first time in a year:*

PAUL D. MARABLE, JR.

01177896 T42 43 A

MAUDE C. MARABLE

1017 W. MAIN

CLARKSVILLE, TEXAS P

Knowing this, Marable arranged to forward his information to the second man and was glad to learn that his parents were told of his situation though it was 60 days later. (p. 25)

The place where we were impounded had once been a French cavalry post. It was here that we traded the short-term, healthy craving for food, which had brought stomach cramps at various times each day

and night for the long-term lesser ache which is the adjustment of the shrinking gut of starvation.

It was also here that we experienced the only instance of theft we were to know. One of our officers missed the small ration of bread which had just been issued and which he had left on his straw mattress while he washed his hands. It had disappeared by the time he returned, and no amount of searching and asking questions of each other turned up the bread or the culprit. (pp. 24 – 25)

At this time it was announced that a systematic interrogation was to begin. We would be taken, individually, to the dummerlager where, with proper cooperation, we could expect to be released into better quarters within about two hours. [The key term here is “with proper cooperation” and infers alternate treatment would be forthcoming if the prisoner did not cooperate.]

Marable was taken to a large, stone horse barn with concrete floors—the stalls reconstructed into enclosed rooms (8 x10 feet), one row down each side with piled straw for bedding. Each cell wall was constructed of board sheeting—to be used as soundproofing.

The interrogation techniques which followed for a week involved isolation in that smallish room, only ersatz coffee each dawn, soup later, with repeated questioning in another small room by someone probably SS who implied by statements that the U.S. was at fault. Marable also delayed the information they wanted by hiding his rank and unit pins in the straw. These were later found which seemed illogical to the German that such an act would take place. Marable only shrugged his shoulders.

The German pretended that the answers to his questions were a folly—just a useless report—but Marable was not fooled. He filled his alone time by using mental games and determined to turn these games on the interrogator.

‘Why do you have this poor assignment? With your obvious intelligence and ability to speak several languages, you should be instructing in your military academy. Have you visited America? You would have many opportunities there.’

This led to civilized conversation between them until Marable added:

I told him that it was easy to see that he was a world traveler and had a much broader view than most people. It must pain a civilized man such as he to be part of any system that would not take adequate care of the food and lodging needs of prisoners of war. And then I told him he must be ashamed of it all. (pp. 26 - 32)

Back to the cell.

Sometime during the night the air raid sirens woke me as many planes were targeting the area. Through these stressful moments he relived his hedgerow experiences as a forward observer and these kept company with his anxiety throughout the night.

Now, trapped in my solitary cell, I knew a sick fear greater than any combat anxiety I had felt. I had never been this desperately afraid before. The heavy explosions of the 500 or 750-pound bombs kept me from hearing anything else, even if ordinary noises could have penetrated my cell. Therefore, I prayed the Lord's prayer and my transformation was complete. I was released [unharmed] into the general compound the next day.

There the German sergeant gave him coffee and some crackers and honey from a Canadian Red Cross packet. Paul had been in solitary confinement for seven days when interrogations ended.

All others had been shipped out except Captain Wood and he had spent nine days in interrogation. The only thing we could figure we had in common, Captain Wood and I, was that we were both field officer artillery types. The Germans spent hours trying to find out from Wood how we could so quickly and effectively mass the fire of not only several batteries but of even several batteries on a target. (pp. 32 – 38)

Incredible luck often exists even in the most problematic situations as chronicled by Lt. Marable in the following incident:

One of the people in the new compound whom I had not expected to see again was Lieutenant Gary Baum. Born in Germany, he spoke English with a heavy accent. And he was unmistakably Jewish. How had he made it through the interrogation? He missed the experience entirely. Baum told me he had spent every possible moment after arrival at Chalons-sur-Marne talking to a middle-aged guard, not Afrika Korps, who patrolled a section of the fence around the original compound, finally convincing him that he must be transferred to a new compound without going through the dummerlager process. By some miraculous work of the guard this had been accomplished, and native German Jew Gary Baum of the 101st Airborne, gliders, made it through. (p. 39)

INTO GERMANY BY TRAIN

Several days later the men were issued a British or Canadian Red Cross food parcel to be shared by 10 men. As they walked along the streets of Chalons-sur-Marne, French people here continued to shout enthusiastically which made the

guards nervous, but no riots took place. Once leaving the town, they walked for many miles and some men, like Paul Marable, became ill from the shared food, but determined to keep pace with the others, he endured. Finally loaded into a boxcar, he remembers the anything-but-first-class journey.

We had spent two months marching, riding charcoal-burning trucks and being crowded into boxcars so tightly that sleeping was a process where we all turned the same way on our sides. Then when stiffness really set in, we had to turn to the other side—all at the same time—all passenger endeavoring to avoid the swinging bucket of excrement over our heads (p. 42)

LIMBURG

Lacking proper nutrition, starvation began to capture their bodies—these manifested in nightmares for many. Sleeping arrangements varied and interrogations were always met with ineffectual answers as far as the Germans were concerned with name, rank, serial number being the only American officers' replies. Limburg is remembered as a '*memorably wretched period*' as the camp (which contained French, British, and Russian POWs) was located near to a major railroad yard which encouraged bombing raids. No comfort was derived by the knowledge that the planes were Allied! (pp. 43 - 46)

BY BOXCAR INTO POLAND

Another boxcar, another train ride.

We did not know where our destination would be except that we seemed to be going in a northeasterly direction. Arrival date at Oflag 64 was August 17, 1944.

When the boxcar ordeal ended, I had spent only a week less than two months with the Germans. We climbed up out of our stupor on the floor of the boxcar and got down out of the smell onto Polish soil—but we did not know it at the time, supposing that we had gone deeper into Germany. Signpost had been changed from Schubin to Altburgund. We ambled down a street whose signs said Hitler Strasse, walking, no longer spirited enough to keep step, no one trying to sing. We walked for a long time, heads hanging downward. We noted no one on the streets. At last we came to the edge of town and the familiar sight of multiple fences of barbed wire and guard towers—only this time we could see hundreds of Americans in uniform walking around inside the fences, gathering at the main gates to welcome us.

It was Oflag 64, the only German P.O.W. camp for American officers of ground troops.

Initially, cheers and shouts were heard from the camp as the newcomers were “*the first group from the second front to arrive and that all of those greeting us had been captured in North Africa or Italy, some more than a year earlier.*”

A quietness settled over the camp as they realized the shocking condition of the new group: “*they had forgotten the particular miseries of the prisoner on the move, having exchanged these for a different sort of the prisoner in camp.*” (pp. 46, 47, 48)

THE CAMP

Processing of the now official Oflag 64 residents was akin to those who had passed through the gates in previous groups: registration by name and German P.O.W. number, assignment to a barracks (his was 7B) with bunk, pillow, blanket, towel, soap and razor blade. The best moment came with the taking of a hot, short shower, then soup and visit with a Red Cross Representative.

Sleep that night was restorative, peaceful and deep—probably born of the good reception and treatment of physical needs and also of the comfort of seeing prisoners actually alive after a whole year.

Outside the southern fence and across the street we had marched along to arrive at the main gate were quarters for the German camp commandant and his staff, barracks for guards, and maximum-security lock-ups.

The first full day spent by Lt. Marable and his fellow officers spent included learning the daily routine with requirements of the camp—this included two roll calls known as *appells* in German and standing in formation for the SAO (Senior American Officer) and the presence of a German officer. Salutes were returned. Physical buildings and history of the camp were also included in their initial introduction.

This was our happy home—mine for only a little more than five months; but five months which seemed then, as now, a much longer period of time. (pp. 48, 49)

CERTIFIED KRIEGSGEFANGENER

A TOUCH OF TEXAS

SETTLING IN

Interrogations, also known as vetting, were carried out by Americans. This ensured that no German spies could infiltrate American ranks. Marable's lasted two days but common knowledge was confirmed and he was cleared. Meeting and talking with others, like Roy Chappell, also helped the men settle in.

'Within two weeks, we felt as if we had been at Schubin for a long time. We knew the SAO and his staff, what we could do in the way of recreation, what diet we could expect and the temperament of guard officers.'

Paul spent his 23rd birthday during this time period with thoughts of his parents on his mind. His days became routine with ersatz coffee, bread, morning appell, a walk around the perimeter, lunch of some sort, trading stories with others and return to barracks before dark. (pp. 49 – 55)

THE BIRDS OF TEXAS

Oflag 64 Kriegies were actually well informed, due to the presence of a very important object referred to as 'The Bird'.

A complete radio receiver had been assembled from parts secretly brought in. Most of us never knew the full story of how this was accomplished, except that much later I was to hear that a certain number of communications specialists and other classified personnel had actually been captured on purpose, as a duty, in order that all permanent P.O.W. camps be somehow supplied with radios to receive word from Allied sources. This explained the mystery around some of the residents of the main building [known as the White House].

'Goon' was the accepted and almost mandatory term for any German guard who came inside the compound and, on assignment from G-2 Colonel Waters, (later a four-star general), I was several times cast in the role except that it was not a role, it was real.

From the radio receiver in the attic of the building outward, along every path of approach, were stationed during every receiving period a succession of goon watchers. By pre-arranged body motions, signals from farthest points all the way to the radio's position could be relayed in time for the operators to hide it. The radio was never discovered by the goons and, as far as we knew, was never suspected.

Possibly no single fact of our existence meant so much to our morale as that radio. It connected us with our own kind. Its protection from the Germans assumed an importance to us which helped nourish an

attitude of defiance—a necessary element for strength, we thought, in our kind of helplessness. (pp. 55, 56)

The other bird mentioned was an actual Raven and it belonged to Amon Carter, Jr. who lived in the barracks west of 7-B.

WORD OF THE 90th

The next section of the book covers information about the 90th Division. Marable was able to make contact with several of his mates and discuss their lives and those of others unaccounted for—even Marable himself had been reported “as missing in action until something was known otherwise or until confirmed dead could be added”. Of course, Paul was relieved to correct this error. (pp. 57,58)

OVERCOAT ITALIANO

For health and endurance reasons, the SAO ordered that all able-bodied men spend time walking the inside fence line at least once a day. Fortunately, since field jackets did not sufficiently cut the wind in the fall and winter of 1944, the Kriegies were glad to hear that overcoats were now available.

We all looked like characters out of Bill Mauldin’s cartoons, famous in the armed services newspaper, Stars and Stripes for depicting slovenly G.I.’s Willie and Joe. The coat never was a great threat to the wind or cold, especially later on, but I was glad to have it. Once again our barracks joined the path parade [down the center of the barrack’s aisle instead of facing the bracing wind outside]. By this time I had made a hat from the cut-off portions of the extra lengths of my uniform’s pant legs, and these were complete with ear flaps. (p. 58)

RELIGION, CULTURE, AND GAMES

His next section discusses church services, games, sports equipment, library contents and musical instruments sponsored by the International YMCA. These contributions raised morale considerably—especially those that required repeat performances because of their popularity and the appreciation of their standing-room-only audiences.

The song “Some Day I’ll Be With You” was a much-appreciated piece and remembered for its message: it reminded the men that their confinement would not last forever. Someday they would return to their loved ones. (pp. 58 – 60)

SUPPLY AND DEMAND

Food was at all times and in all ways a serious matter. In distributing food, so carefully were we to see that each man received the same as every man even the thin cabbage soup was divided in what, looking back on it, seem unnecessarily meticulous manner.

We ate in groups of eight men each, by cubicle. One of us would measure out into eight bowls—spoonful by spoonful—every bit of our quota for the meal. Such care was taken that surely the quantity of soup in each bowl was the same. As the group leader of that day pointed to a bowl and said, ‘Whose?’ the man would call out a name until finally in this way each of us had his bowl of soup.

When Red Cross boxes arrived, they were carefully stored until each man received his own and it became private property. Contents were identical.

Each box contained one can of the following: Spam, corned beef, jam....

liver paste, oleomargarine, powdered soluble coffee and powdered milk. Also included was a small box of graham crackers, a chocolate ‘D’ bar, some lump sugar and a few other items.

Some men began eating contents of the package immediately. Many ate every bit of this wonderful food within a couple days except for some of the powdered coffee, powdered milk and margarine. As hungry as we all were, it might be expected that everyone did this. Not so.

Some preferred to eat sparingly and to stretch out over a period as much as ten days the contents of their boxes. There was much trading of items of food, and it was easy to observe that this was because of natural differences in preferences among the men. This trading led to widely-known, market-determined ‘standard’ values for each item in the boxes. Supply was fixed; demand varied.

We had no money or other medium of exchange, and all transactions were by barter; so the standard values of items were expressed in points.

For example, a can of powdered milk was rated at 150 points—the highest of all food items. Corned beef was 90 points; Spam, 80; chocolate bar, 50; jam, 40; liver paste, 35; crackers, 2 points each; sugar lumps, 2 points each, and so on.

Some of the kriegies were able to make a profit in food. Some doubled the amount they originally received. How did they do it? By studying the market demands...the variations from ‘standard’ in the desires of individuals, and by initial self-sacrifice and hard work.

This kind of talk could be heard: ‘Tell you what I’ll do. You like corned beef (90, standard), don’t you? You let me have your can of Spam (80, standard) and ten crackers (10 x 2 = 20, standard) (a total of 100, standard, from this customer) and I’ll try to find you a can of corned beef.’ To the corned beef lover, 100 points is not too high a price.

Does the trading middleman then go to someone who actually demands the full 90 points, standard, in order to relinquish his corned beef to the middleman?

He does not.

He goes to someone who loves Spam enough to give up his corned beef for it—even though he is sacrificing 10 points, standard, for the transaction.

When the deal is complete, the trading middleman has made a profit of ten crackers worth ten points, standard, each – 20 points.

What did these profit-makers do with their extra food?

Sometimes they sat around eating it when most everyone else had already consumed theirs. To some, this did not seem right, and they even wanted to pass camp regulations which would have provided punishment for these men—and which would have confiscated their extra food.

Others defended them and said, ‘No, we all start out with exactly the same amount. We ate ours when we wanted to eat it or saved it when we wanted to. Some of these men have gone from barracks to barracks in the cold to provide their services for a profit. They worked for their extras. Everybody is welcome to the same opportunity.’

There were those who saw greed as the motivation for the traders. But I noticed that when food was given to someone who had become weaker than the rest it was only those who had it to give who were able to give—and this never included those who had gobbled theirs immediately after receiving it. This demonstration of the working of the law of supply and demand was a dramatic example to me, as was the nature of our individual value judgments about what something is worth to have, give, work for, or trade others.

And so, with reminding myself that none of us is self-sufficient and that inequalities are imposed from many directions on all of us, I still have reliance upon the essential sanity of John Ruskin’s statement that...

“The first necessity of all economic government is to secure the unquestioned working of the great law of property—that a man who

works for a thing shall be allowed to get it, keep it, and consume it in peace, and that he who does not eat his cake today shall be seen, without grudging to have his cake tomorrow.” (pp. 60 – 63)

[This topic was so well received that it was later printed as a single editorial, “A Lesson in keeping, getting, eating one’s cake” by Paul Marable on the Editorial Page of the Waco Tribune on February 13, 1984.]

“PLANS” FOR MASS ESCAPE

ESCAPE?

THE TUNNEL

As a northern country, snows were often present in Poland by October. This thought often became parallel with the thought—even plan—to escape to someplace warmer and known as home.

Lt. Col. Cheal, the leader of Barracks 7B undertook a ritual of standing at parade rest while gazing out of the snowy windows. This repeated activity caused Marable to ask Captain Winfield about his purpose in doing so.

‘He’s calculating landing and take-off times for C-47 transport planes.’

‘What C-47?’

Winfield replied that such a plan had been discussed whereby C-47s would land, overwhelm the guards and their machine guns then fly everyone to safety.

When repeating this topic to others I was told that plenty of others had not been told. These discussions also brought out the realities of the slowness of these planes, distances across enemy territories how many of them there would have to be, and the fact of snow already four feet deep everywhere. The older kriegies didn’t even bother to reason with me, other than their looks of amazement.

I therefore decided Winfield would bear watching too. And maybe so would I!

Jumping so easily at the idea of escape made me realize how much I would like to be out of the ‘jug’ as we called it. If I could come up with a feasible plan, it would have to be cleared with the Escape Committee—a review system designed to screen out wild ideas which might put the entire camp in jeopardy on a slim chance one or a few individuals could make it to somewhere on the outside.

Armed now with the term “*escape*” and what it entails, Marable spends several paragraphs exploring ways in which this might be accomplished including tunneling but dismissed this idea as:

‘this would be impossible. It was a considerable shock to me, therefore, when shortly after my neat conclusion I was asked to help scatter dirt from one.’

Escape plans were common as were at least one major tunnel. Marable was not aware of their locations, but helped alongside others by contributing slats from his bed to shore up the tunnel sides and dispensing the dirt by carrying it in a tube secluded inside his trouser legs and spreading it among the muddy snow and ice, even in 40 degrees below zero weather. Unfortunately, he developed badly swollen feet and cracked toenails, so critically injured that the wearing of shoes became prohibitive. (pp. 63 – 68)

THE GIFT

Winter was on us now in full force.

Here all of us had the shakes, specially upon returning from appell or a meal. Heat in our barracks could hardly be felt. Our issue of peat bricks was insufficient to keep the fire high enough to more than heat the furnace walls. We took turns hugging the furnace for a few minutes at a time.

With more need for body heat, food should have been supplied in better quantity. It wasn’t. Bad weather itself could delay trains we figured, and then there was the mixed blessing of our air raids on German railroad stations and switch yards; but we still believed we could have been given more food. More than a month since the last Red Cross parcel. Our SAO made a ruckus with the kommandant, but no greater amounts were issued. One concession was granted: appells were cut from two to one daily.

The SAO even used negotiation for better treatment by promising that we officers would not try to escape. Under colorful words, the answer was a resounding ‘NO’.

Most men stayed in their bunks, fully dressed in their clothes, under blankets and whatever other warm items they could use for heat. Captain Gruenberg, our doctor, theorized that current calorie intake was under the minimum required to sustain life for an average male. Current food available was ersatz coffee, black bread, thin cabbage or sugar beet for lunch and boiled potato for supper, sometimes with a spoonful of corned beef. (p.70)

In desperation, Marable wrote to everyone he knew to send a food parcel but when none were delivered, he became certain that the letter was never submitted to the Red Cross.

A small miracle did occur which bolstered Marable's spirits. Lt. Bill Hill, the chief interpreter for the group, handed Paul an unopened can of powdered milk and when asked about this gracious gift, Bill simply said that he did not want it. Marable began remembering the many times his mother had fed tramps who came to their door during the depression.

Ever since, when I have known of help to someone without the giver's hope of any kind of repayment, I have thought of that gift to me in far off Poland, of Bill Hill, my Mother, and their kind of charity.

Most of the powdered milk I used myself in accordance with Hill's instructions; but it was impossible not to treat my cubicle mates to a small share. Captain Gruenberg sprinkled some of his over canfuls of snow and said it was the most delicious ice cream ever conceived by man. I can still see him hunkered over the goo, spooning it down.
(pp. 68 – 72)

ROARING LIONS

Two unusual events were seen in December. The first one concerned a vertical vapor trail seen in the early morning sky. Perhaps it was a V-2 rocket—they never knew its purpose.

The second one concerned the arrival of members of the 106th Division whose patch depicted a roaring lion. They were wearing very warm clothing and carrying bedrolls and valpacks. But these did not appear battle worn and for a very good reason.

The 106th had never been issued its battle equipment, weapons or ammunition and had been in a rear area waiting to be outfitted with battle gear when the blitzkrieg had hit.

Caught the first day of action in the Battle of the Budge, they had become captive and joined the kriegies at Oflag 64—no roaring was to take place in this war. (pp. 72 – 73)

CHRISTMAS, 1944

With Christmas approaching, thoughts of home in other times came out in conversations more and more until finally anyone mentioning home or food was hushed by seriously-meant yells of 'quit' or 'cut it out' or more profane equivalents.

Red Cross packages had not been seen for several months and the absence of these treasures with the never-ending winter weather caused a sea of despondence across the barracks and the men within.

Then another shipment of Red Cross boxes finally appeared and although each had to be shared by several men, the atmosphere of thankfulness was felt across the camp.

We issued in the Christmas Season with carols, special worship services and discussions meant to convey that really, we should love our enemy. Most of us found that sometimes, though understanding the duties of the enemy, it is not possible to feel love for them individually or collectively. We did not have an “All’s Quiet On the Western Front” blend of “Stille Nacht” and “Silent Night.” Not at Oflag 64.

But the food helped. (p. 73)

EPILOGUE NOTE FROM PAUL DAVIS MARABLE

On the 25th Anniversary of the Christmas 1944 in Oflag 64, I had a greeting reproduced and mailed to all those whose autographs I had collected in haste on the day of the big marchout when I had been left in camp...and to such people as Geoffrey Aitken and Joe Bilder whom I had met later. Most of them came back unopened marked “Not Known” or even Insufficient Address”. But many were not returned, like Bill Hill’s and I hope they made it through—and that their lives have been full of happiness as mine. (p. 100)

THE RUSSIANS ARE COMING

The camp with buzzing with reports from ‘the bird’ about Russian movements including a supply line running north-south through Warsaw along the Vistula River—100 miles east.

In mid-January, we were informed rail transportation had been ordered to move all personnel into Germany, and our talk about these developments brought out the military strategist in all of us. Then on January 18, the Russians under the command of Marshal Georgi Zhukov jumped off a race westward covering more than 30 miles the first day. Withdrawing German troops began passing in front of the camp.

Oflag 64 kriegies felt a mixture of excitement and hope mixed with concern about future plans for the camp. The next day Polish civilian doctors arrived to act as

liaison between guards and medics in examining the capabilities of those who could not be included in a foot march. In addition to Marable's feet issues, he had also lost fingernails and toenails, as had others. Fearing that those left in camp would be gunned down, Paul wanted to leave with the other marchers, but Dr. Gruenberg advised against this and stated that there was no such plan. The real danger rested in the 40 degrees below zero weather.

Immediately after lunch, he reported to the hospital building for examination and was told that he would not be a marcher and was now 42 pounds lighter. (pp. 74 – 75)

THE LAST ROUNDUP

Later that day orders were read across the camp in German and translated by our officers that early the next morning all should dress for warmth and secure extra blankets and any available foods. Everyone spent a restless night and were reluctant to say goodbye to fellow barracks mates.

In last minute scurrying, I ripped out a blank page from a YMCA notebook in which I had been keeping a few written observations and dates in sporadic diary form. I ran around collaring those not out the door, collecting signatures and addresses of all I could. Then I reported to the infirmary, surprised to see about 40 or 50 men.

From every window in the relatively warm building, we watched appell in progress—nearly 1,000 or maybe it was 1,200 men standing in the trampled snow in the vicious cold.

Final birdsong the night before had indicated the Russians were continuing their push across the Polish plains with great speed in a massive winter offensive.

Just as the exiting march was scheduled to begin, the appell count was off by two men. After several counts, the march began, minus the two.

We waved as long as we could see any of them, and after a long time the last of the column disappeared into the white distance. Not until then had I noticed how quiet we had been, a little in awe of the situation. (pp.75 – 76)

FREE !?

The barracks were empty, all guards gone. Marable checked his B-7 and felt some nostalgia about his bunk mates—nothing else remained of the five months of shared stay.

Walking to the barracks in the south-west corner revealed the hiding place of the two missing officers. Later he inspected the entryway of their tunnel and found the following:

In the washroom separating the A and B halves of this barrack was, as in all barracks, a four-foot cube of fire bricks. In the center top was the heavy steel cauldron for boiling clothes, countersunk above grillwork for which a fire could be built. Only a few ashes remained. By lifting the cauldron and removing the grill and digging the mortar from between the bricks on the furnace floor and lifting then out, the diggers had begun their tunnel.

The masonry of the furnace extended through the floor of the barracks and into the ground underneath, perfectly concealing from a ferret crawling beneath the floor any evidence of a tunnel start.

With bricks replaced and ashes filling the mortar spaces, grill and cauldron replaced, nothing gave away the secret.

The tunnel may never have been reached anywhere without collapsing, but at least it had hidden two of the crew who had worked on it when for their own reasons they had wanted to hide. For my part in helping to scatter the yellow dirt from the cold snow, I was proud again – clear down to, but not including, my feet.

Deciding to move to the middle barracks on the south side, the men were better able to survey German troops and others who passed by the camp. Locking the front gate offered a bit more security. Sounds of yelling from the front revealed a group of civilians who handed the men a selection of old fire arms and some ammunition. With thanks said to the group who then departed, several carefully handled the gifts but decided not to test-fire the weapons.

Friendly Polish people helped them to break into the food bins and guards' supplies across the street—revealing food (bags of potatoes, cans of meat, bread, and lots of sugar), German winter hats with fur trim and bayonets, of which Marable chose one. Several boxes of unopened mail were also found. Marable's feeling of anger were overcome by his joy in receiving three letters from home. Everyone was OK.

Starting a fire in the furnace they cooked and ate until they were full for the first time in months. Unfortunately, their strict diets forgotten, they overloaded on the sugar counts of some foods and suffered the results for several hours.

By nightfall we realized we would have to perfect some kind of organization. We assigned two guards—actually watchers, or observer-reporters—on the front gates and one outside each end of the barracks.

We were all wide awake and full of speculation. The birdsong would have helped but no one connected with the radio had been left behind and none of us knew where it was located or how to operate it.

During his posting assignment, he saw flashes of artillery bursts to the south and to the north, sheet lightning effects of the bombardment. East and west displayed no evidence of battle.

Throughout the next several days, camp numbers grew as a few marchers who had escaped joined them at the camp. (pp. 76 – 79)

THE RUSSKIES

Shouted sounds coming from the front gate hinted at chaos.

Foot troops, presumed to be German, had been passing along the road for an hour and a group of them noted our gate guards in their newly-acquired German winter hats. These troops are not German but drunken Russians and their actions unpredictable.

Explanations that we are Americans go unheeded, even when another officer tries to communicate by using the language of his parents, Ukrainian, dialect differences resulted in continued shouting and possible confrontations.

Flying out of the barracks comes a Roman Catholic Chaplain in full vestments; he had been conducting a service for the Catholics among us and as he nears the gate, he talks directly to the Russians which lowers the temperature of possible crisis. 'Is he speaking Russian?' No one answers. Suddenly the Russians gather their things with the word 'tovarich' from the Chaplain and move down the road.

All they knew to say was 'Berlin' pointing generally westward. We were later to find this the extent of Russian troops' understanding or motivation, that they must fight their way to Berlin. It was if a cheerleader had coached them in only one yell.

The new hats now trampled in the snow for solidarity with Marable and the others watching from windows feeling as though this had been a dream inspired play.

The decision to post guards/observers had been wise.

The date was January 21, 1945. From then until February 28, 39 days later, our hardships changed in degree but not much in nature. For a few days while we remained in Schubin our food and warmth were remarkably pleasant; but later, with the Russians in charge of us, the cold and hunger returned. For the full seven weeks with our

noble allies, the Ruskies, we never knew whether we were still prisoners or somehow liberated. Countless times a day we got no answers to our questions of 'What happens now?' 'Where do we go from here?' 'Have our people been notified?'

Only two events during our stay at the camp since being rid of the Germans gave any evidence the Russians knew we were there. Once when a Polish cow was slaughtered for the troops, we were given some beef to eat. Then we were treated to a Russian training [propaganda] film.

The only startling incident during the Oflag 64 sojourn under Russian control was the morning a German heavy bomber came over, low, and put us in a scare until it kept flying eastward after test firing its machine guns from the right waist and tail at our barracks.

Finally we were told to get ready to move out, by truck; but it was three days later before we did. (pp. 79 – 82)

EASTWARD IN GMC (NYET, RUSSKY) TRUCKS

I loaded myself into the rear of the third truck in line, together with my wooden box full of treasure—my sheaf of notes, the German winter hat, bayonet, boiled potatoes, German cigarettes. The box was in the form of a suitcase with wire handle and I felt like a man of substance.

The trucks were two-and-one-half-ton General Motors cargo types used by American forces. Lend-lease made available to Russia along with the Thompson .45-caliber submachine guns, Sherman medium tanks, snowbird jeeps and other materiel. Familiar GMC emblem was prominently stamped on the front of the radiators but none of the Russians would admit these were American trucks. 'Nyet, Russky!' they would say. The same unbending position was theirs for the origin of all our equipment except for the Sherman tanks--maybe they didn't think much of the Sherman.

Word was passed to us from the handful of Polish civilians of Schubin who had come to watch us go that the temperature had been measured at 40 degrees below zero. Sitting in the back of the steel-floored truck, waiting for the trip to begin, I could feel the stiffness of my face and the numbness which was to afflict my every joint before the day was over and already begun to work on my ankles.

There is always a clown in every crowd and this one was the driver of their truck. He stripped of his shirt and undershirt and took a snow bath. Water dripping

off his elbows froze before it hit the icy road and bounced up like sleet. Marable and the other passengers didn't feel any warmer for this experience.

Snow drifts caused slowdowns, erratic driving, and a painful ride for us all. Ten miles later the truck ran out of gas and was filled by use of a beadon [Jerry?] can attached to the cab.

Most of the day-long trip was a misery of taking searing breaths of sub-zero air and trying to keep circulation going in our legs and feet. Eyes felt better with lids closed. Opening them, I once saw a camel with a pack on his back, slogging through the deep snow. I knew I had lost touch with reality. A camel? In northern Poland? In the snow? Maybe hallucinations precede death by freezing, I thought.

I looked at some of the others to see if they had frozen stiff. One of them was also staring back at the camel we just passed. 'A camel?' I yelled at him. 'Has to be!' he yelled. For some time afterward, I looked for another one among all the troops, vehicles and equipment moving westward, but I never did see another one. (pp. 82 – 83)

KUTNO

By mid-afternoon, the sky was beginning to darken and we stopped in the Polish town of Kutno, 50 miles from Schubin. There we were given an order which translated as 'Find your own billets.'

Just as everyone started to step down, a Thomson submachine gun noise filled the air around us, causing us to react as in a battlefield. The reason? A swastika flag had been seen over a two-story building and this seemed the simplest way to remove it. With my friend Roy Chappell's assistance, we found an apartment house nearby where 10 ex-kriegies were also staying. Tea was served after which we located a place in the available building.

On site they talked to a frail woman who told us that the Russians had confiscated her apartment and treated her as one would a slave for all needs. Paul and Roy were to share a bedroom with two Russian 'stasha-leutnants' the lowest commissioned officer in the Russian Army. Her hatred was understandable—worse than the Germans she said.

The two young officers appeared about this time and wanted to adopt the Americans—'Tovarich! Russky and Amerikanski'—was Marable's answer to keep civility.

The next morning, while the Russky officers were sleeping, a couple arrived who asked them to breakfast. This invitation was followed by others who all hated the infringement of their country by the Germans and the Russians.

Early the second morning when they met the truck caravan, Marable was glad to see that his treasure box was still there—if not his coat, which had been taken by someone else at the apartment.

This day's travel was more comfortable because of better roads. They stopped to eat at a restaurant in a village and ate their first bowl of Kasha—barley gruel—their daily rib-sticking meal for as long as they were in Russian territory. (pp. 83 – 87)

REMBERTOW

Arriving late day at this city, close to Warsaw, Marable and his group were assigned to the ground floor of a three-story building. British soldiers were already residents there, having escaped while the Russians were overrunning their POW camp. Most had survived for five years since Dunkirk and were hungry for news as they had heard no BBC broadcasts.

The Americans were well received. A sergeant major spoke about plans to leave and exit through Yugoslavia as he, as well as other Brits there, were not trusting of Russia's propaganda goals. Two days later the British N.C.O.'s were gone—they had experienced too much war and now wanted '*home*' which meant England. Marable occupied his hours with currency trading between other nationalities there, whereby he collected some and traded others.

The next day a group of Americans decided to take a walk into the commercial district after being warned about German snipers. Remembering the previous incident, they stayed aware. During their walk, Paul suggested that they cut theirs short, so turned toward home when they met an American woman who asked if they wanted to come to her home for good food and cards. She stated that she was married to a diplomat and was caught in the war.

Decades later, Marable added this scenario to those of the Russian speaking American Chaplain, the camel vision and other small images recorded for later retrieval. (pp. 87 – 90)

PNEUMONIA

Returning to the building, Marable was feeling much worse. Lieutenant Tankersley, a combat doctor, was summoned and with Roy Chappell's assistance, managed to move him to a room set aside as an infirmary and dispensary. He had developed double pneumonia and was out for 36 hours before he began to recover thanks to the doctor's supply of sulfur.

Dr. Tankersley also held sick call every morning for displaced persons who occupied the upper two floors of the building, but stated that he was unable to

help most who were either missing limbs or seriously ill. This was due to limited supplies and medications. Many medical personnel faced these situations, especially in current war zones. Chappell and Marable had seen many such cases with men dying all around them while doctors and medics were overwhelmed for multiple reasons—worst-case scenarios for those who wanted to help.

On Paul's mother's birthday, February 20, word was received that he would leave the next morning by train. Arriving by truck and receiving help while boarding the train, Marable finally felt at peace when Chappell and Murphy promised to take care of his suitcase and wooden box—his only treasures now. Their official exit plans were to take place on a different date. (pp. 90 – 92)

TRAIN TO ODESSA

Similar to trains Marable had ridden previously, this one had one luxury item—a stove in the car's center for warmth and three layers of shelving with straw bedding for passengers. Still recovering his health, Paul slept many hours and survived on his bowls of kasha.

On the second night when the wood supply was gone, they huddled together on the shelves for warmth—enough to keep them alive. During a train stop, rumors spread that all aboard would be shot; Marable managed to stand outside, but unable physically to escape. Fortunately, noise drew his attention to view a long section of fencing being broken away and carried to the train—firewood for the stoves. He felt relief and gratitude for this act which saved their lives and hoped the farmer would forgive this sacrifice.

The next day we began seeing signs painted in Russian, and all day saw evidence of old battles when we looked through the door cracks—burned out tanks and artillery pieces rusting from earlier conflict. We were travelling due south now most of the time. On the fourth day we ran out of snow except in the creek lines and shade. The fifth day we arrived in what we could tell was a large city, and someone correctly guessed it was Odessa. (pp. 92 – 93)

ODESSA

Several friends shared carrying my wooden box on the march of several miles from the train, consolidating their keepsakes with mine. I had protected that box and its treasure of written notes and German bayonet and German winter hat through truck and train rides, Kutno and Rembertow stops.

We so welcomed the relative warmth of the air and relief from cramped quarters of the box cars—there were many deep breaths of inhaling what some called spring air. A few groans were heard on the quick march when leg muscles were tried to the limit, and it was easy to tell which eight or ten of us had been lounging in the infirmary in Rembertow. My feet gave me less trouble than formerly, however, and I decided the warmer climate agreed with them.

We marched through gates set in a masonry wall and into what had once been a fine home in times past but which was now an abandoned estate. No furniture or coverings for the windows.

After dividing up floor space, we assembled outside and were escorted by a Russian officer on a quarter-mile walk to a delousing station. Here in groups of ten, we stripped and stood under shower heads and were given soap. Providing the shower was one of the very few things I ever felt the Russians did to be hospitable.

The next day we were startled by the appearance of an American major, fully fleshed and in clean uniform. He was a member of the military attaché's staff in our Moscow embassy and told us that the American Ambassador had not known until the day before of our presence. The major had flown from Moscow to check our situation and to learn if we would be able to board a British merchant ship now in the Port of Odessa when it left for Port Said, Egypt. We would be able, he assured.

It was the happiest news we could recall during any of the several months past, and some stated repeatedly and flatly it was the best thing they had heard in their entire lives. The ship was the first Allied ship into the Port of Odessa since the Dardanelles had been cleared of German resistance.

Plenty of wood was located for a fire in the estate's fireplace and even sleeping on a warm floor was a joyful experience. Though both his heart and his spirits were high, Marable had learned to conserve his energy; he was not yet ready for a road race.

Being informed that incoming food was aboard the British ship in the harbor, everyone anxiously awaited delivery of the cartons. Consuming the sweet packets of mincemeat was satisfying, but consuming too many led to their previous issues with heartburn and discomfort and they looked forward to balanced meals. (pp. 93 – 95)

THE QUEEN MARY

The big day arrived—February 28, 1945. We had been under Russian control for 38 days. We started down the rutted road and the wooden box which I was determined to carry this time became heavier with each step. When a truck came along through our column and slowed to our pace as it came to me, I asked one of the non-walking people if he would take my box to the boat. ‘Glad to do it’, he said, and I passed it up to him.

The old merchant ship in the harbor looked to me like the Queen Mary, and I said so. Word spread about the dubbing and the name stuck.

We stood on the dockside while the major from Moscow gabbed with the Russian officials and filled out bundles of papers. I looked around for the group which had ridden in the truck but did not see them. Finally locating the man who had the box, he explained to Marable that he was unable to navigate the gangplank with it in-hand and left it by the closest post then went aboard.

Marable, not immediately locating it, tried unsuccessfully to communicate with the Russians, and when he heard the ship’s engines revving up, preparing for departure, he had a decision to make. Either stay and keep looking on foreign soil with little chance of success, or climb onboard and begin his journey home.

I gave no more thought to the stupid box and panted up the gangplank as fast as I could go. (pp. 95 – 96)

BON VOYAGE

The trip across the Black Sea on the merchantman Queen Mary was serene. Weather became warmer by the hour. The ship’s crew was attentive. We ate four small, tasty meals every day from wonderful varieties of foods and began a noticeable recovery from the deprivation of food and warmth of the past.

Exercise around the decks after a good meal and breathing the warmer salt air made us all visibly bloom. We reflected on how marvelous the human body must be to take abuse and then be able to rebuild so quickly.

Other sites included the Strait of the Bosphorus, Istanbul’s seaside, Sofia and thinking about the historic waters we were now sailing through, the Aegean and into the Mediterranean, made the entire trip a luxury cruise to us.

Already the good things were beginning to erode and overcome 255 days of something less than a picnic. (pp. 96 – 97)

This narrative should now end.



Paul Marable added footnotes toward the bottom of the page about the rest of his journey home—the last part on an American ship without convoy.

He arrived in Boston, phoned home, had reunion with his parents in the Greyhound station in Dallas and felt at home once more.

Pages 98 – 100 contain an Epilogue – U.S.A, which includes lists of friends made along the way and information about them.

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